disbursement of credit to the farmers over the last few years.

Functioning of Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortiums

2895. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the functioning of the Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortiums;

(b) the work done by these Consortiums; and

(c) the efforts made in the areas of getting credfit facilities and market linkages for the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) At the Central level Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) has been set up as a Registered Society under the Societies Registration Act w.e.f. 18.1.94. The States have been advised to nominate an appropriate agency–organisation to handle the SFAC work and undertake project activities.

At the initiative of the Central Government, project studies had been undertaken in 12 identified districts namely Barpeta (Assam). Mahbubnagar (Andhra Pradesh), Valsad (Gujarat) Dharwar (Karnataka), Ernakulam (Kerala), Jabalpur (M.P.), Ganjam (Orissa), Pondicherry, Bikaner (Rajasthan), Pithoragarh (U.P.), Dharmapuri (Tamil Nadu), and Midnapur (West Bengal) in order to identify the areas for developing agri-business. The project reports are ready and the states have been advised to initiate action for considering the implmentation of the project reports. District level workshops have also been held in Rajasthan, Assam, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu with a view to generate awareness of the concept of SFAC and promote agri-business activities.

(c) NABARD had been involved in the project formulation/preparation in the 12 identified districts so that the credit needs at the stage of implementation are taken care of. The market linkages are to be taken into account when the states get ready for the implementation of the projects.

Achievements of Krishi Vigyan Kendras

2896. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have studies the achievements of existing Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country, particularly in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any improvement is required in their functioning; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The achievements of existing Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country including Gujarat have been reviewed by the Quinquennial Review Team (QRT) in 1993 constituted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Besides, every year State and Zonal workshops are organized to review the achievements of KVKs.

(c) and (d) The important areas suggested by QRT for improvement include; identification of training programmes through bench-mark survey, scheduling of training programmes in advance, conducting training programmes based on the principles of Adult Learning, involvement of Directors of Extension of State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) in planning KVK activities, developing strong linkages with SAUs and other Research Institutions for technical back-stopping and identification of disciplines required for fulfilling the mandate and functions of each KVK on